city, in the covering up of that huge, unsightly stream of dirty water which passed to the sea through the Queen's Park. A sad infliction it was. The laying out of the splendid carriage road, and the excellent arrangement of the grounds, will form permanent attractions to this delightful promenade. A wall around a part of the royal domains is still wanting, and should be set about: miserable hedges of whinstone are out of keeping in such a place. It is the felicity of Edinburgh, that close at hand to its busy streets and closely-wedged buildings are solitudes such as Zimmerman might have envied. From the park under notice a very short walk conducts to scenes as still and picturesque as are to be found in the secluded spots of the Grampians, while, at some point suddenly attained, there bursts forth the full majestic spectacle of a great and sublime city, and the hum of voices falls upon the ear like soft and distant music.

THE IRON TRADE.

The evils resulting from the late inconsiderate rise in the price of iron are daily developing themselves; they are great and numerous. The unsettled state of the trade in South Staffordshire is attended with the most inconvenient, if not ruinous, consequences. The manufacturers, especially the makers of heavy goods, are suffering under the depression caused by the recent extraordinary advance on the raw material, although there is an abundance of orders from Canada, and the United States, in Wolverhampton, Birmingham, and Walsall, the completion of which cannot be longer delayed.

The home market suffers in the same degree from the same cause. Travellers for factors now on their journeys in all parts of the kingdom are in many instances unable to take, and their employers at home unable to execute, orders for manufactured iron goods, on account of the uncertainty, in the price of iron. But bad as this state of things is, the mischief does not end here. At the time of the advance, the iron-masters considerately raised the wages of the workmen, and now, as a matter of course, some of them are proceeding with the reduced price of the article to attempt a corresponding reduction of the price of labour. A partial turn-out in the districts of Bilston and Wednesbury has been the consequence, and one riot of rather a serious character has already occurred.

From Newport we learn that sales of bar-iron have been effected as low as 7*l.* 5*s.* per ton.

ELECTRIC TELEGRAPHS.

The recent thunder storms, both at home and on the continent, have elicited some interesting phenomena connected with electric telegraphs. One of the needles on the dial at the Southampton terminus became unfitted for use by its polarity being destroyed, and the attendant who was working the machine at the time received a smart shock from the handle. At Rouen, the atmospheric electricity, combining at times with the current conveyed along the wires, impeded or precipitated the movements of the needle, giving to the composition the effect of dropped letters and occasionally destroying the sense of the intended phrase. M. Matteucci of Pisa, who is well known for his experiments in galvanism and electricity, has announced his belief that the electric telegraph can be made use of between Dover and Calais, the wires being sunk deep into the sea. He has arrived at this conclusion, from having succeeded in passing the fluid along wires immersed in the waters of the Arno.

A similar idea, only on a grander scale, of course, has been started in America. The *New York Tribune* proposes to run a copper wire, well covered and as large as a pipe stem, from Nova Scotia to the coast of Ireland. The writer says, "Its gravity would sink it to the depth where water was so dense as to be of equal gravity, and consequently beyond the reach of any kind of collision." While on this subject we may mention an experiment that was tried last week at Brussels, in the presence of the Minister of Public Works, by which the dispatch was written with a pen by the mere action of the fluid; it is stated to have been entirely successful.

DEATH FROM THE USE OF LEADEN PIPES.

An inquest has been lately held at Malvern Wells, on the body of an agricultural labourer named Richard Wilkins, who came by his death it appears from having drunk a quantity of cider which had been conveyed in leaden pipes from the cider-house to the place where it was drawn for use. It appeared that the deceased, with several others of Mr. Benbow's farm servants, had, after partaking of this cider, been seized with illness resembling the painters' colic, which it is known arises from the constant use of lead in their business. Mr. West, surgeon, of Malvern, at first attended him, but Mr. Hamilton, of Malvern-wells, attended the deceased at the time of his death, which happened on Saturday last. Mr. West explained that the deceased died of apoplexy, brought on, he believed, by drinking the impregnated cider. Mr. Benbow, the deceased's employer, explained to the coroner the circumstances under which the pipes had been laid down. He had employed Mr. M'Cann to lay down pipes of the proper white metal, tin, or composition; but he (Mr. M'Cann) had substituted lead, saying it was superior for the purpose. On the discovery of the mischievous effects produced, the use of the pipes had been discontinued. The jury acquitted all parties of blame except Mr. M'Cann, and returned a verdict "that the deceased died of apoplexy, induced by congestion of the brain." The coroner intimated that, after an investigation like this, every farmer and publican using such pipes would be subject to a verdict of manslaughter or murder in the event of a similar catastrophe.

The fact is well known that leaden pipes and cisterns become dangerous when the water which fills them is soft and pure. The lead, however, which the water takes up may be removed by filtering the water through paper, a circumstance which has been explained by supposing that the oxide of lead is not really dissolved in the water, but merely suspended in it. At a recent meeting of the chemical society, Lieut.-Col. Philip Yorke stated that the oxide of lead is taken up by the substance of the paper and combines with it, from an affinity such as subsists between the same metallic oxide and cotton fibre; the last taking the oxide from solution in lime-water, and lead being often fixed as a mordant on cloth for dyeing in this way, according to the statement of Mr. Crum. He stated also, that the power of the filter may be exhausted, and that therefore it would be unsafe to trust to the action of a filter to separate oxide of lead from water for an unlimited time.

THE BURIAL GROUND NUISANCE.

The manner in which the action brought against the parties concerned in the Spafields burial ground has terminated has astonished all persons who are interested in the matter. Immense trouble had been taken by individuals, and much expense incurred, especially by Mr. G. A. Walker, and by Mr. Watt who lives near the ground; the former was in court prepared with evidence which would have frightened the country into some change in the system, but the whole was frustrated by the course pursued by the counsel for the crown, a course which we find it very difficult to account for. It is to be hoped that Mr. Walker, to whom the chief merit of laying bare the enormities of the system belongs, will not be discouraged in his praiseworthy efforts to abate one of the most serious evils existing in the metropolis.

SONNET ON LINCOLN MINSTER.

I've seen the *Lyncolne Mynster* and the hill
Which for long centuries it hath yerowned,
And in beholding, such delight have found
As our forefathers' pious minds did fill
At the evolving from th' inspired will,
A work yet onward endlessly renowned.
Æthereal Fancy! thou art here unbound
Roving from human deeds of subtle skill,
(Pillar and lancet-arch, and tracery rare,
Proportion, whose perfection bears a spell!
The Votive Chapel, proofs of holy care,
With roof by worthy Willson carved well)
Unto the destination of my prayer,
Where our great God, beneficent, doth dwell.

J. Ellis.

THE ROUND TOWERS OF IRELAND.

Sir,—Now that the subject of the origin and uses of the ancient round towers of Ireland is again before the public, I shall deem it a favour (as an old correspondent) to be allowed to offer a few observations upon it through the columns of The Builder.

I may premise that some of our most learned antiquaries have promulgated opinions in regard to those towers quite inconsistent with an actual *inspection* of these interesting memorials, *connected as they are* with the adjoining ecclesiastical ruins,—for the ruined church and the old tower are invariably found near each other. Now the periods assigned to the erection of the old churches seem scarce a matter of dispute; in fact, their dates of construction are given with as much precision as of yesterday, whilst no notice appears to be taken of their "next door neighbour," the old tower.

On this omission on the part of early writers I shall hazard an opinion: it is simply this, that the date of the tower and that of the adjoining little church are one and the same, for reasons which I shall give before concluding. Should this assumption appear probable, for direct proof is out of the question, it follows that much of the obscurity connected with the earlier notice of our old ecclesiastical edifices may be cleared away, by considering the tower as a *part* or in direct connection with the church. Viewing the brief and simple notice of the old chroniclers, we find it seldom went beyond naming the founder of the church, the period of erection, and the name of the locality where erected, and passed over all architectural details as apparently unimportant. To the scanty materials thus supplied by early historians in respect to the towers, modern commentators have not hesitated to supply details; as many of the fanciful theories advanced by our antiquaries rest on the analogy between certain *Phœnician* and Egyptian antiquities and the round-towers; while others still more numerous draw all their resources from some antiquated glossary of the Irish language having reference to the derivation of *names* said to belong to the old towers.

Many of these learned inquiries were carried on *in the study or library* of the antiquary, and the result when before the public was attacked and instantly demolished by some contemporary, by precisely the same mode of reasoning as that adopted by his opponent, neither parties bestowing a *single* thought on the *stone and mortar* of the round-towers, beyond the undeniable fact of their being well built, a truth known to everybody. The old tower of Aghadoe, near Killarney, though apparently wanting in character from being what is denominated a "*Stump*," or *ruined tower*, is nevertheless not without interest, arising from a comparison of the quality of stone with which the outer casing of the tower is constructed (pale yellow sandstone), and the stone employed in the door and window-jambs of the ruined cathedral or church close by, the stones referred to in both buildings being precisely of a similar class of rock; and here I may observe that no yellow sandstone rock is nearer Aghadoe than 30 miles. Having had ample opportunities of comparing the stones in both ruins during a stay of seven months at Killarney, I found the angles or ornamented parts in the church shewed more signs of decay than the stones of the round-tower; but this is easily accounted for from the circular form of the tower; the ashlars having no exposed ends or joints, are less liable to be acted on by changes of the atmosphere than the stone used in the church.

To understand the matter fully, it is necessary to offer a suggestion not heretofore made. Whoever proposed to build a castle, abbey, church, &c., without first consulting their architect? That our ancestors had wisdom and sagacity enough to follow a similar course there cannot be a reasonable doubt. The object of such consultation would naturally be to look to the locality, the site, water, and, in the *then* early days, the procuring of *efficient workmen* and materials. These preliminary steps settled, the architect, who in all probability was an ecclesiastic, would, as a matter of necessity, say how am I to protect my work-people, collected here with great difficulty, from the assaults of the marauding Dane, and the not less dangerous attacks of the turbulent natives? The project of the

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